

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (canceled).
2. (currently amended): A sheet discharging apparatus ~~as claimed in claim 1;~~
including a conveying means for conveying a sheet on a conveying path, and a high speed discharging means for discharging through an exit of said conveying path, said high speed discharging means being disposed at said exit, and a discharging speed of said high speed discharging means being higher than a conveying speed of said conveying means, said high speed discharging means comprising:
a drive shaft;
a drive roller rotatably and coaxially attached to said drive shaft, said drive roller being unshiftable in an axial direction of said drive shaft;
a frictional connection unit for firmly coupling said drive roller and said drive shaft with frictional force; and
a nip roller, idly rotatable, said nip roller nipping said sheet with said drive roller to discharge out said sheet,
wherein said frictional connection unit further comprises:

a fixing member fixed to said drive shaft;

a friction member for frictionally contacting an end surface of said drive roller; and

a biasing member provided between said fixing member and said friction member, said biasing member pressing said friction member ~~to~~ against, and into frictional contact with, said end surface of said drive roller.

3. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said biasing member is a coil spring having a first end and a second end, said first end is fixed to said fixing member, and said second end is fixed to said friction member.

4. (currently amended): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein said friction member is provided with a contact portion for contacting said drive roller, and said contact portion is chamfered to have ~~linear inclination or an~~ arc-shape or a linear inclination to an axial direction of said drive roller.

5. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said sheet comprises plural sheets, which are conveyed on said path in a situation that said sheets are positioned in zigzag among plural rows, and sequentially arranged in a single row.

6. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said drive roller comprises plural drive rollers disposed at an interval in the axial direction of said drive shaft.

7. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein said nip roller comprises plural nip rollers disposed at an interval on a shaft.

8. (currently amended): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein each of said drive rollers is positioned ~~to on~~ on said drive shaft by a pair of E-rings, and each of said nip rollers is positioned ~~to on~~ on said shaft by a pair of E-rings.

9. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further comprising an endless belt disposed downstream from said high speed discharging means, and said endless belt receiving said sheet discharged with said high speed discharging means.

10. (new): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said friction member contacts only said end surface of said drive roller.